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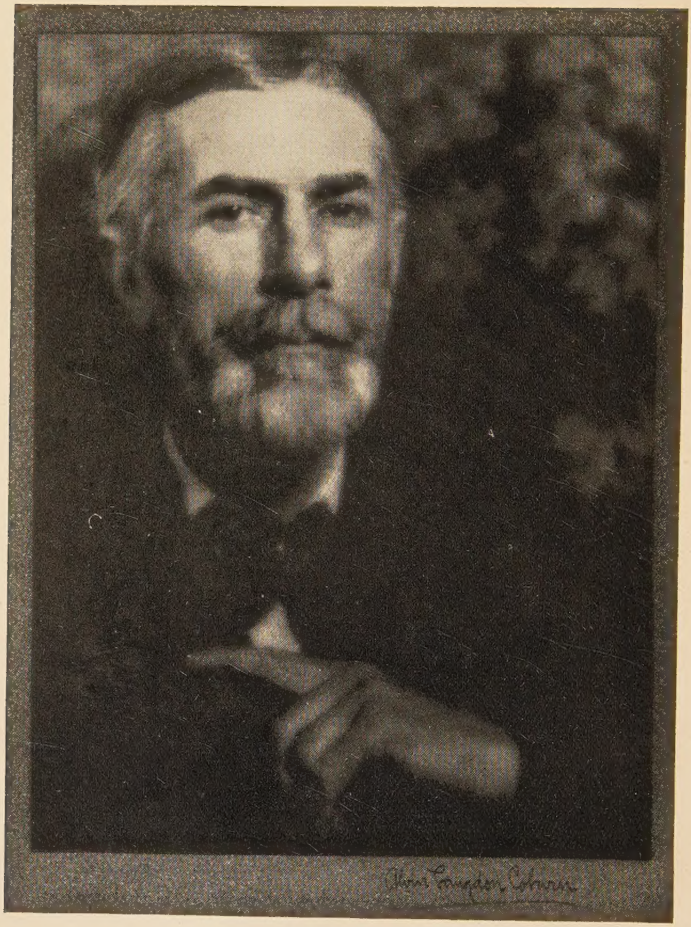
Edward Carpenter



Edward Carpenter

From the photograph by ALVIN LANGDON COBURN

Edward Carpenter: The Man and his Message. By Tom Swan

Jonathan Cape
Eleven Gower Street London

First published, 1910.
Fourth Impression, 1913.
New and revised Edition, 1922.

Y1787

TO thee, old cause!
Thou peerless, passionate, good cause—
Thou stern, remorseless, sweet idea,
Deathless throughout the ages, races, lands.

WHITMAN.

Edward Carpenter

The Man and his Message

I

The Man and his Books

" Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love." TENNYSON.

IN his preface to the original edition of *Leaves of Grass* Walt Whitman says many significant things concerning the qualifications and the functions of the Democratic poet. To one who would be a " maker of poems " he gives the following advice: " This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labour to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence towards the people, take off your hat to nothing known or un-

known, or to any man or number of men, . . . re-examine all you have been told, in school or church or in any book, and dismiss whatever insults your own soul; and your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency, not only in words, but in the silent lines of its lips and face, between the lashes of your eyes, and in every motion and joint of your body."

The Poet of Democracy must not be merely an "idle singer of an empty day," but, as J. A. Symonds says in *Walt Whitman: A Study:* "He must be one who has understood the wonders of the world, whose eyes pierce below the surface, to recognise divinity in all that lives and breathes upon our planet. . . . The man of letters, the artist, who would fain prove himself adequate to democracy in its noblest sense, must emerge from earthly vapours of complacent self and artificial circumstances and decaying feudalism. It is his privilege to be free, and to represent freedom. It is his function to find a voice or mode of utterance, and ideal of form, which shall be on a par with nature, delivered from unscientific canons of interpretations, and with mankind delivered from obsolescent class-distinctions. . . . He must be gifted with imagination penetrative to

the soul and life of fundamental realities, and his expression must be as simple, as suggestive, as inevitable as a natural object. He will aim at creating a new and independent vehicle of language suitable to the quality of his personal perceptions."

To what extent this ideal is realised in the person and the writings of Edward Carpenter I shall, after submitting my evidence, leave the reader to decide.

Edward Carpenter was born at Brighton in 1844. In his tenth year he was sent to school at the Brighton College, remaining there as a day-boy for three years, when the family removed to Versailles. Whilst in France he was a pupil at the Lycée Hoche, a great place with five hundred scholars, where everything was conducted upon semi-military lines. On returning to Brighton, Carpenter again went to his old school and continued there until he was nineteen years of age. Then, instead of going at once to one of the Universities, a lengthy visit to Germany was arranged. At Heidelberg he studied physics and chemistry. Upon his return to England Carpenter went to Cambridge and became a Fellow of Trinity Hall in 1868, taking orders a year later. He was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Ely, and

for some time served as curate under F. D. Maurice.

As an undergraduate Carpenter had, on the advice of his tutors, read for the Mathematical Tripos, and came out tenth wrangler. For three years or so mathematics occupied nearly the whole of his time and thoughts; until an awakening interest in literature and literary composition took its place. While still an undergraduate he had won two college prizes for English essays; one, curiously enough, on *Civilisation*! And after taking his degree he also won the Burney prize of £100 for an essay on *The Religious Influence of Art.* Viewed in the light of subsequent events these facts are of considerable interest.

At this time Carpenter was also trying his hand at poetry. That even his early work was not devoid of merit is proved by the following extract from a letter written by a school and college chum of Carpenter's, a clergyman of the Church of England, and a literary critic of repute. Speaking of the first edition of this brochure, he says: "You do not notice his earlier poems—'Moses' and 'Narcissus.' He counts them, I fancy, among his apprentice work; but they show true poetic insight and a mastery of poetic

form which would hardly be credited by those who know only his post Walt Whitman volumes."

Towards the end of 1873 the atmosphere of Cambridge and clerical life became almost unbearable to Carpenter; the conventions and insincerity of it especially; and at length he felt that he "must leave or be suffocated." So he threw up his fellowship, relinquished orders, and for the next seven years devoted his time and labours to the University Extension movement, lecturing in northern towns on music, astronomy, and physical science. This work was undertaken mainly because it afforded for the time being a means of livelihood, but partly also because through the agency of this movement Carpenter expected to get into closer touch with the manual workers; the upper classes being, he was convinced, impossible from the point of view of social reform.

While still at Cambridge, Carpenter had been filled with a desire to give to the world the thoughts and emotions which were afterwards to find such adequate expression in *Towards Democracy*. "I wanted," he tells us, "to write some sort of a book which should address itself very personally and

closely to any one who cared to read it—establish, so to speak, an intimate personal relation between myself and the reader; and during successive years I made several attempts to realise this idea . . . none of these attempts satisfied me, however, and after a time I began to think the quest was an unreasonable one."* Early in 1881 this desire had grown so strong that he gave up his lecturing, in order that he might have leisure to work out these ideas. Carpenter was at this period living in a little cottage near Sheffield. Building himself a wooden hut in the garden, he set to work, and in this hut " or in the fields and woods, all that spring and summer, and on through the winter, by day and sometimes by night, in sunlight or in rain, in frost and snow, and all sorts of grey and dull weather," he was engaged in writing what is without doubt his greatest work—*Towards Democracy*—the first edition of which was issued in 1883.

A book such as this cannot in the nature of things be expected to leap at once into popularity. It must have time to penetrate into the hearts and minds of its readers, before its meaning and its beauty can be appreciated, or even understood. Nor is it

* *Towards Democracy*, p. 511 *et seq.* (Pocket Edition).

every one who can, even after all these years, accept its teachings, or respond to its appeal. But if *Towards Democracy* did not win for Carpenter instant fame it has won for him true friends and devoted followers in all classes of society, and in all parts of the world—Havelock Ellis being one of the first to recognise its worth and to congratulate its author. The influence of this book has increased year by year until to-day it is almost impossible to gauge it. Only those who have got into touch with Edward Carpenter's numerous disciples have any idea how widespread and powerful this influence is. The following passage will serve to indicate its nature and its strength. It is from a letter to the present writer by one of the most earnest, and for many years one of the most active, lecturers in the Socialist movement. "I came under Carpenter's influence as a morbid High Church woman with vague humanitarian impulses: and the lead he gave me was literally from darkness and bondage out into life and liberty. No one ever did so much for me—for he gave me Jesus Christ's teaching in its wholeness and truth for the first time. I think Carpenter's teaching of the Spirit of Democracy—his demand that we recognise the absolute *equality* of our fellows before

we can properly love or serve them, or be free ourselves, is the *word of life* for the future."

No series of extracts, however skilfully selected, could do justice to this wonderful book, *Towards Democracy*; but hints of its meaning may be gathered from a study of such poems as " A Mightier than Mammon," " After Long Ages," " What have I to do with Thee," " O Love to Whom the Poets," " Have Faith," and " The One Foundation."

In the same year (1883) Carpenter acquired the freehold of a piece of land, about seven acres, built a small house upon it, and with the assistance of one or two workmen, friends and employees, set about cultivating the land as a market garden. From this time forward, for seven or eight years, his time was spent almost entirely in the companionship of the manual workers of Sheffield and surrounding country, sharing their pursuits and their labours.

This experiment of Carpenter's has frequently been attributed to some theory, supposed to have been held by him, of individual or social salvation. He had, however, no such idea. He says himself that it was due entirely to the need he felt for a life in the open air, a life largely of

manual work, and one spent in close contact with the mass of the people.

The Socialist movement, which was now gathering force, enlisted his sympathies, and from 1883 onward he joined in the propaganda, speaking at the street corners and lecturing in Sheffield and other towns of the North of England. In 1886 an association of Sheffield Socialists was formed, partly in connection with William Morris and the Socialist League in London; a coffee-shop was started in a crowded district of Sheffield, and this became for a time the centre of an active propaganda.

At home, in the country, during this period, both at Bradway and Millthorpe, Carpenter took part in all the duties of farm and garden life, accustoming himself to the care of horses and cattle, carting of stone and manure and coal, the use of the hoe, the spade, the scythe, and the pick and shovel. About 1886 he also began making sandals (from a pattern sent from India) for the use of himself and friends; and this in time developed into a considerable business, which was carried on by his friend, George Adams (when Carpenter gave it up) first at Millthorpe and later at Letchworth.

The result of this altered mode of life and

thought was seen in the publication, in 1887, of *England's Ideal*: a series of papers on Simplification of Life, Desirable Mansions, Interest, etc. And this was followed (1889) by *Civilisation: its cause and cure.* Besides the paper which gives to the book its title, this volume contains essays on Modern Science, The Science of the Future, Custom, and a criticism of the Darwinian theory of evolution.

As early as 1877 Carpenter had visited the United States, chiefly, no doubt, for the purpose of meeting Walt Whitman, whose *Leaves of Grass* had made a profound impression upon him. In 1884 Carpenter again went to America, spending some time near Whitman; also visiting Walden Pond, bathing in it, and like most other visitors adding a stone to Thoreau's cairn. He made the journey out and home as steerage passenger, and he has given us a vivid description of his experiences in the poem, "On an Atlantic Steamship."*

A few years later (1890) a journey to the East was undertaken—the object now being mainly to make the acquaintance in Ceylon of a Gñani, a representative of the ancient

* *Towards Democracy*, p. 203.

Wisdom-religion of India. The winter of 1890-1 was spent in Ceylon and India, and for nearly two months Carpenter sat at the feet of the Indian Sage; the rest of the time he travelled widely over the two countries. His impressions were published in 1892 in *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta*: Sketches in Ceylon and India. In addition to the chapter on A Visit to a Gñani, this book contains chapters on the scenery, peoples, social customs, caste arrangements, and so forth, which came under his observation. In this book we have not merely the impressions of a tourist, but the profound reflections of a man seriously interested in the natives, and the grave problems that we, as rulers of these two countries, will have to solve sooner or later—the reflection of a man, moreover, who by his sincere sympathy won not only the confidence but also the affection of the natives of all classes, from the poorest to some of the most influential.

After a short interval two more volumes of essay were published: *Angel's Wings*—essays on Art and Music and their relation to life—and *Love's Coming of Age*. The latter represents Carpenter's views on Sex Love and Marriage. The whole matter is treated with perfect frankness yet with

perfect delicacy. Speaking of *Love's Coming of Age* in *The New York Times* (23 June 1912), Richard Le Gallienne says: "So far as I know Mr. Carpenter is the one writer living from whom such a book could have been sufferable. From his hands, however, the book is not merely sufferable but is something very like a modern classic."

Under the title of *Ioläus* Carpenter published (1902) an anthology of friendship. This is a collection of stories, legends, folk-customs, poetry, and philosophy of friendship from quite early and primitive times down to our own; and forms a kind of supplement to *Love's Coming of Age*, so far as it deals with another phase of human affection and attachment. For Carpenter, like Walt Whitman, has a great belief in the value and importance of friendship as a factor in human development.

The next book to be published was one of Carpenter's most ambitious prose works—*The Art of Creation*. The subject matter of the book, the problems discussed, and their solution, had been referred to from time to time in his previous writings; but are here set forth at length, and with great precision and force. For years preceding and during the years that followed the publication of

Towards Democracy Carpenter had been accumulating material for this work, but in a kind of unconscious way, more as a quiet mental growth than as a grave and systematic labour. So it came about that he found himself in possession of a coherent and harmonious philosophical system, or outline of a system, which he felt it would be worth while to embody in definite literary form.

"*The Art of Creation* is an attempt to explain the Creative process in the light of modern (and ancient) thought. It suggests —as its title would indicate—that the Creation of the World, like a work of Art, proceeds by perfectly definite laws from inner states of being and feeling to outer manifestation; and that Man himself, as soon as he understands, can take part in this art of Creation."*

The following year (1905) Carpenter gave us a book as different from *The Art of Creation* as a book could be; but as important, and as necessary, from his standpoint, and certainly as integral a part of his teachings, namely *Prisons, Police, and Punishment.* This is an eloquent indictment of

* It is interesting to note that in his latest volume of plays, *Back to Methuselah,* Bernard Shaw expounds a very similar theory.

the existing penal system and an appeal for a more reasonable and humane method of dealing with crime and criminals. It also contains an essay on the Non-Governmental Society.

Twelve months later (1906) *Days with Walt Whitman* was issued from the press. Herein we have a record of Carpenter's two visits to America; also chapters on Whitman as Prophet, The Poetic Form of Leaves of Grass, and Whitman and Emerson. Carpenter went out an avowed disciple of Whitman, prepared to admire him as Man, as he accepted him as Teacher; and these visits, and the personal contact they made possible, more than justified his attitude. His perfect sympathy with the American poet enabled Carpenter to give us in these pages what is, perhaps, the most accurate and reliable interpretation of Whitman's personality and spirit ever written. That such, at least, is the opinion of some of those who knew Walt personally is evident from the following letter:

" 306 Hope Street,
" Providence, R.I., U.S.A.
" 15 *Nov.*, 1909.

" To Edward Carpenter,

" Ever since I read your *Days with Walt*

Whitman in 1906, it has been in my mind to write you and say that of all the many books and papers concerning Walt Whitman not one has touched me as yours has done. Not one seemed to me to comprehend the man as you have comprehended him. In those short visits, it is marvellous to me that you have taken in the sweetness and sadness and loveableness and beauty of his character as well as what you rightly call his 'cussedness.'

" It was my great privilege to know him intimately from the time he came to Washington in the latter part of 1862, for many months, and for some time he was the guest of Mr. O'Connor and myself, as I have told in my *Atlantic Monthly* article of June, 1907.

" As he himself implied, which you quote on page 37, he had a personal love for O'Connor, but, for all that, they disagreed violently in regard to giving the ballot to the Negro—Whitman opposing the idea.

" As you will conclude—at the time referred to I was the wife of the late William D. O'Connor.*

" Sincerely yours,
" Ellen M. Calder."

* When Chief Secretary Harlan discharged Whitman in 1865 (who at the time held a clerkship in the Department of the Interior) " because he

The next book from Carpenter's pen (1908) was a companion volume to *Love's Coming of Age* and *Ioläus—The Intermediate Sex.* As already pointed out, *Love's Coming of Age* deals with sex-love and its place in society. *Ioläus* with another form of attachment and one as enduring as the other, that is, friendship between persons of the same sex. In *Ioläus* this subject is treated from the poetical point of view, in *The Intermediate Sex* from the scientific standpoint. Carpenter returns to this topic in a later book, *i.e., Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk* (1915).

Also in 1908 Carpenter gave us his *Sketches from Life in Town and Country.* A series of character studies of men and women he had known at one time or another. Written in a light and graceful vein, it is worthy of every attention, revealing as it does its author in a charming light. It also contains a number of Carpenter's earlier poems. Two years later he published another of his early works—*The Promised Land.* This had been issued originally under the title of *Moses.*

was the author of an indecent book," it was Wm. D. O'Connor who wrote a very vigorous and eloquent vindication—*The Good Gray Poet.*

In his *Drama of Love and Death* (1912), Carpenter again takes up and deals at length with questions touched upon in previous books. This interdependence of one volume upon another, this linking together of his various works (each dovetailing as it were into the others) is one of the most characteristic features of his writings. Each one of Carpenter's books is complete in itself, and needs separate consideration; but it is not until they are viewed as a whole that their compass and significance are fully realised. All the lines of thought, the threads and tendencies of his other books, no matter how diverse in character, are here gathered together, and we see that they have all been leading up to, and directed towards, the same point.

The substance of the book, the problems of Birth and Life, of Love and Death and Immortality, of the origin, nature, and destiny of Man, are as old as the human race itself. But "the mass of work bearing on these subjects which has been done by modern science in the three domains of physics, biology, and psychical research is bringing us rapidly to a new standpoint." *The Drama of Love and Death*, along with its companion volume, *The Art of Creation*,

opens out a vista almost too magnificent to contemplate calmly. Not that these books are detached from the others, they grow out of them as naturally as the blossom from the bud. *The Drama of Love and Death* is Carpenter's proclamation of man's ability to conquer Love and Death; to convert them from being the masters of the soul into its servants, and "messengers of a new order of existence."

August 29, 1914, being the seventieth anniversary of Carpenter's birthday, his numerous friends and admirers decided to present to him an address of congratulation; which was signed by three hundred men and women, many of them eminent in art, literature, science, or politics. It is a noble document, and as great a credit to those who endorsed it as it is a tender tribute to Carpenter who received it.

Meanwhile, forces outside our control had plunged the country into war. This led Carpenter to write his *Healing of Nations* (1915), an enquiry into the causes which make for war, and the suggestion of means whereby wars may be avoided. The next year saw the publication of a volume of autobiographical notes, *My Days and Dreams*. To the future biographers this will

prove a positive fount of suggestion and inspiration, revealing as it does not merely the external conditions, but what is more vital, the inner forces, the formative influences, that determined his intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development.

The labour unrest so prevalent of late years is discussed, and the way to industrial peace and social reconstruction outlined, in *Towards Industrial Freedom* (1917). This includes chapters on Industrial Reorganisation, Industry as an Art, and Beauty in everyday life. Carpenter's latest book, *Pagan and Christian Creeds* (1920), is an investigation into the origin and evolution of various religious rites and beliefs from earliest times onward, and an attempt to trace them to a common source. Carpenter is firmly convinced that there has been slowly emerging through the ages a World Religion that is destined to supersede all other religions; that will break down the barriers between race and race, and class and class; and free men's souls from the fetters that have hitherto bound them. A religion based upon the kinship not only between man and the other animals, but also between man and the Spirit which pervades the entire universe. A religion that

will respond to the demands of reason, and also satisfy all the needs of the soul; that will enable humanity to rise superior to fear, and envy, and hate; and lust, and greed, and sin; and to know that the soul of man is immortal even as the Soul of the Universe is immortal.

In addition to the books referred to, Carpenter has done a translation of the story of *Eros and Psyche*, written a play for children, *St. George and the Dragon*, pamphlets on *Vivisection*, and *Empire in India and Elsewhere*, and has contributed many notable articles to various newspapers and magazines; and edited a volume of Socialist songs with music.

The personality of Edward Carpenter is as interesting as his writings; for his works are founded, to quite a remarkable degree, not upon book learning alone, but rather upon actual personal experience; from the workaday matters discussed in his *England's Ideal* to the vast illumination of *Towards Democracy*, *The Art of Creation*, and *The Drama of Love and Death*. On studying his life one is deeply impressed by the continual process of development which has characterised it. And from the brief, and perhaps inadequate, digest given

of his books it will be seen that this process, and every phase of it, is reflected in them; ranging as they do from market gardening to the art of creation; from the simplification of life to the immortality of the soul.

In consequence of this constant growth he has been able to view life from many points—to see it whole; and to realise in his own person the ideals with which he has sought to inspire others. There is no pretence in his life or in his writings; both are conspicuous for their sincerity. The outstanding feature of the man (as of his work) is his sanity—his perfect balance. "There is a sweet reasonableness in his wildest assertion, and a twinkle of merriment in his eye when his thought is at its deepest." *

Nowise egoistical, or obsessed with a sense of his own importance, Carpenter does not preach, or moralise, or pose. And though the mantle of the prophet be upon his shoulders he is never ill at ease therewith; or unduly self-conscious, and never "stagey." He wears his dignities as lightly as he does his clothes; and they are just as becoming to him. Not ignorant of the

* *Edward Carpenter: Poet and Prophet.* By Ernest Crosby.

originality and the value of his work, Carpenter is modest and entirely free from pedantry. Never obtruding his opinions, and ever as willing to listen as to talk. His manner is invariably kind and considerate without being in the least demonstratively so. On first meeting Carpenter one feels that he is a man to whom it is possible to speak freely, and without fear of being misunderstood or misjudged; one who would "remove stumbling-blocks instead of creating them"; closer acquaintance confirms the first impression.

In stature Carpenter is about middle height, his limbs are well though slightly formed; and his face, although his beard is now grey, is still strangely youthful looking, and still bears a strong resemblance to the photograph taken in 1887. The following pen portraits may not be without interest. The first is by Olive Schreiner, who for some time lived in a small cottage close by Carpenter's home at Millthorpe.

"The first time I met Carpenter was in London about 1883, at a meeting of a society which we had then newly formed for the purpose of attempting to arrive at some method of carrying out practically the ideal of a simplified and socialised life. He

was then somewhat under forty. What struck me, as I looked across the table, was the curious light upon the face. The features themselves, not small and not very regular, were forgotten; only the expression remained with one.

" After many years of intimate acquaintance, the impression of that first meeting remains dominant. In the case of no other man I know does the physical seem so merely a vehicle for the expression of the subjective. A slight man of middle height, plain rather than handsome, nothing remarkable in face or figure, and dressing as the ordinary working men dress, he yet awakens a certain curious magnetic sympathy and affection wherever he goes.

" I remember once being with him in a Paris restaurant. As he was a vegetarian, he ordered only a small plate of soup, while I ordered a more extensive and expensive series of dishes. As a rule the attention of waiters is determined mainly by the extent of your order, and the style of your attire; yet they stood about his chair smiling on him with absolute affection, while I could hardly draw their attention to my wants. When he left they followed him smiling to the door, as though he had been some

exalted personage, and expressed a wish that he should come again. He had not tipped them, had never seen them before, and, I suppose, never saw them again.

"From the stout old lady in a railway carriage with her pug dog and maid, to a soot-covered engine-driver, or a Paris newspaper seller, his delicately-drawn sympathetic personality awakens the same magnetic response. . . . It is this curious power to awaken, without effort, sympathetic and human feelings in others akin to that which he carries about in himself that his genius lies; and this power is better expressed in the man than even in his works themselves."*

This one is by David Lowe, the author of *The Gift of the Night* and *The Ballads of a Great City*, who strikes a somewhat similar note.

"In 1892 Edward Carpenter, at my invitation, lectured at Dundee, and during his visit accepted the hospitality of my bachelor lodgings in South Tay Street. It was a most enjoyable time, and there are certain recollections which would give a fairly good index to Edward Carpenter's personality. I can see him now, the tall

* *The Diamond Fields' Advertiser*, 27 July 1895.

slight figure gliding about so softly, or sitting so calm and still, his presence never impressing me with the idea of body. His conversation was without strain—simple and considerate in the manner of it; and his references to people, while invariably keenly discriminating, were clothed in kindness. Along with an intimate knowledge of men and events, and the maintenance of many friendships, Edward Carpenter carries a remoteness which allows him to see relations justly. The Christian injunction to be in the world but not of it he fulfils in an altogether individual way. Often I smile to myself when I recall that visit, for my landlady placed before us the laden board of a meat eater, whereas I discovered that my guest had secreted about his belongings a tin canister containing shelled nuts.

"In the evening, after persuading me to play on a rather rickety organ, he also sat down to it. After hearing him play I was astonished at the patience he had shown with me—he must have suffered much. But if you want a delightful experience, walk towards midnight arm in arm with Edward Carpenter along the fine stretch of Dundee esplanade, while the stars are blinking in the restful blue and in the flowing tide of the

beautiful Tay, while the moon casts a shimmering highway of gold across the darksome waters! Your companion is an astronomer, but he is also a poet, with a cosmic sense which radiates harmony. Is it not a curious combination, that of poet, scientist, musician, lecturer, market-gardener, traveller, mystic, and social reformer?"*

The years that have passed since these sketches were written have dealt kindly with Carpenter. As he was twenty years ago so he is to-day; mentally he is just as alert, physically wellnigh as active. It is difficult to regard him as an old man of seventy-seven. But then he is not old save in years. He is the same dear friend and comrade to all who know him as he ever was. That he still retains their affection is shown by the number of visitors that, year in and out, make their way to Millthorpe to enjoy the company of Edward Carpenter and his friend George Merrill. Nor is he out of touch with those who live in distant parts of the world. One may see on his study table neat stacks of letters from friends, many of them distinguished men and women, in all quarters of the globe. To be with

* *The Labour Leader*, 20 December 1902.

Carpenter, if only for a little while, is to realise that it was a right impulse that led him to reject the artificial life of fashionable society, and to seek this life of communion with Nature and ordinary working folk, and in daily contact with the earth he loves so well.

II

His Philosophy

Philosophy consists in an insight into the essential substances of things.

W. CLARKE.

I arise and pass—dreaming the dream of the soul's slow disentanglement.

E. CARPENTER.

TO dispel the mystery which surrounds the origin and destiny of Man has been the hope and aspiration of the thoughtful in all ages. It is possible that the three interrogations—the Why, the Whence, and the Whither—had, even at the dawn of history, the same strange fascination they possess to-day. These questions probably suggested themselves to man when he first began to reflect on the nature of his environment; and would become more and more pressing as the faculty of reflection was developed. With the birth of self-consciousness would come a desire to know from what Power this was derived; how life itself came into being; and why. With the

evolution of intelligence these problems would grow in importance; the desire to solve them would become more and more intense. Every religious creed, every system of philosophy, no matter when, where, or by whom formulated, has had as its object the solution of one or more of these questions; has been an attempt to ascertain, and define, man's relationship to the rest of the universe.

If these world-old questions are to be answered with any degree of satisfaction, it is necessary that the answerer should know, and understand, the story of man's ascent. True it is that the answers given by some of the earliest of the world's great teachers are in some respects identical with those given by modern science; that every religion, every system of philosophy, contains some elements of truth. Studied in the light of present knowledge these teachings assume a new significance; but not until they are interpreted in an evolutionary spirit can we estimate their real value. While admitting that we have hardly improved on their attempts to explain the origin of life, we may look with hope to the sciences of sociology and psychology to make clear to us many things that were hidden from the ancients. It is in this direction especially

that Edward Carpenter's contributions are of so much importance.

The basis from which Carpenter starts is well defined in the following passage from one of his letters to me: "I find that my thought proceeds upon an Assumption—namely that all existence is an Emanation (an Expression, a Revelation) of one Being underlying." In reference to the development of the different organisms and species he says: "The *rationale* of all growth or evolution is recognition—recognition of the Soul, in self or others. Side by side with the egoistic or individualising force which we must assume as breaking down the One into the Many—and which has the character of darkness and blindness and ignorance—comes the upbuilding illuminating power which leads the Many back to the One—which reveals to the Many that they *are* One." *

This process is described in detail by Carpenter in *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, *The Art of Creation*, and *The Drama of Love and Death*. On the general question of evolution Carpenter inclines towards Lamarck rather than in the direction of Charles

* *The Adult*, January 1899.

Darwin. He does not believe that the ascent of man is due entirely to some accidental characteristic possessed by his non-human ancestors. In answer to the arguments of the Darwinians he says: "If the progenitors of man took to going upright on two legs instead of on all fours, merely because a few of them by *chance* were born with a talent for that position, which enabled them to escape the fanged and pursuing beasts, then when this danger was removed they might have plumped down again into the old attitude; but if the change was part and parcel of a true evolution—a true *unfolding* of a higher form latent within—an organic growth of the creature itself, then, though the moment of the evolution of this particular faculty might be determined by the fanged beasts, the fact of such evolution could not be determined by them. Besides, are we to suppose that Man, the lord and ruler of the animals, came by way of *escape* from the animals? Do lords and rulers generally come so? Was it fear that made him a man? Were it not likelier that in that case he would have turned into a worm? He would have escaped better perhaps that way. Is it not rather probable that there is some nobler power that worked transforming

—some dim desire and prevision of a more perfect form, the desire itself being the first consciousness of the urge of growth in that direction—that prompted him to push in the one direction rather than the other when he had to hold his own against the tigers?" *

Doubtless many species have survived by reverting back; but while this retrogression may explain the fact of their survival, it affords no explanation of the fact of *progressive evolution.* To make the latter possible other factors must have operated. What these were, in Carpenter's opinion, may be gathered from the following passages.

"It is often said by Biologists that *function precedes organisation*—that is, man fights with his fellows before he makes weapons to fight with; the rudimentary animal digests food (as in the case of the amoeba) before it acquires a stomach or organ of digestion; it sees or is sensitive to light before it grows an eye; in society letters are carried by private hands before an organised postal system is created. Such facts properly considered are of vital importance. They show us, as it were by a sign-

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure,* p. 191 (1921 edition).

post, the direction of creation. They show how any new thing or modification of an old thing may come into being. They may be supplemented by a second statement—namely that *desire precedes function*. That is, man desires to injure his fellow before he actually fights with him; he experiences the wish to communicate with distant friends before ever he thinks of sending such a thing as a letter; the amoeba craves for food first, and circumvents its prey afterwards. Desire, or inward change, comes first, action follows, and organisation or outward structure is the result." *

"The Theory of Exfoliation then differs from that very specialised form of Evolution which has been adopted by modern science, in this particular among others: that it fixes the attention on that which appears last in order of Time, as the most important in order of causation, rather than on that which appears first; and recalls to us the fact that often in any succession of phenomena, that which is first in order of precedence and importance is the last to be externalised. Thus in the growth of a plant we find leaf after leaf appearing, petal

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 186.

within petal—a continual exfoliation of husks, sepals, petals, stamens and what-not; but the object of all this movement, and that which in a sense sets it all in motion, namely the seed, is the very last thing of all to be manifested . . . the cells are not the origin of Man, but Man is the original of the cells. The rationale of sea-anemones and mud-fish and flying-foxes and elephants has to be looked for in man; he alone underlies them. And man is not a vertebrate because his ancestors were vertebrate; but the animals are vertebrate, because or in so far as they are fore-runners and off-shoots of man.*

"On the whole then, judging from man himself (and it seems most cautious and scientific to derive our main evidence from the being that we are best acquainted with), it certainly seems to me that though the external conditions are a very important factor in Variation, the central explanation of this phenomenon should be sought in an inner law of Growth—a law of expansion

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 200. Students of *The Principles of Western Civilisation* will not fail to notice that this is an anticipation of the theory of "projected efficiency" put forward by Benjamin Kidd.

more or less common to all animate nature. Partly because, as said before, the unfolding of the creature from its own needs and inward nature is an organic process, and likely to be persistent, while its modification by external causes must be more or less fortuitous and accidental and sometimes in one direction and sometimes in another; partly also because the movement from within outwards seems to be most like the law of creation in general." *

After carefully considering the whole subject from various angles, Carpenter is firmly convinced that there is a force "at work throughout creation, ever urging each type onward into new and newer forms. This force appears first in consciousness in the form of *desire.* Within each shape of life sleep wants without number, from the lowest and simplest to the most complex and ideal. As each new desire or ideal is evolved, it brings the creature into conflict with its surroundings, then gaining its satisfaction externalises itself in the structure of the creature, and leaves the way open for the birth of a new ideal. If then we would find a key to the understanding

* *Civilisation : its Cause and Cure,* p. 191.

of the expansion and growth of all animate creation, such a key may exist in the nature of desire itself, and the comprehension of its real meaning.

"What then is desire in Man? Here we come back again, as suggested at the outset, to Man himself. Though we see pretty clearly that desire is at work in the animals, and that it is the same in kind as exists in man, still among the animals it is but dim and inchoate, while in man it is developed and luminous; in ourselves, too, we know it immediately, while in the animals only by inference. For both reasons therefore if we want to know the nature of desire—even to know its nature among animals—we should study it in Man. What then is desire—what is its culmination and completion—in Man? Love is the sum and solution of all desires in Man—that in which they converge; the interpretation of them; for which they all exist, and without which they would be considered useless. . . . May it not, must it not, be the same thing in animals and all through creation? Beginning in the most elementary and dim shapes, does it not grow through all stages of organic life clearer and more and more powerful, till at last it attains to self-consciousness in humanity

and becomes avowedly the leading factor in our development. . . .* It is then finally in Man—in our own deepest and most vital experience—that we have to look for the key and explanation of the changes that we see going on around us in external nature, as we call it; and our understanding of the latter, and of History, must ever depend from point to point on the exfoliation of new facts in the individual consciousness. Round the ultimate disclosure of the ideal Man, all creation (hitherto groaning and travailing towards that perfect birth) ranges itself, as it were like some vast flower, in concentric cycles; rank behind rank; first all social life and history, then the animal kingdom, then the vegetable and mineral worlds. And if the outer circles have been the first in fact to show themselves, it is by this last disclosure that light is ultimately thrown on the whole plan; and, as in the myth of Eden-garden, with the appearance of the perfected human form that the work of creation definitely completes itself."†

Man, however, had not yet earned the right to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Just

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 198.
† *Ibid.*, p. 205.

as he was apparently about to enter into the region of the blest, there occurred what may be regarded as a fall; and evolution took another direction. What was the nature of this fall and what have been its effects? Carpenter explains it in the following manner.

The animals in their natural state, that is before they are domesticated, are, as Carpenter says, "whole"; which, according to his definition of health, is as near physical perfection as can be. "In the animals we find this physical unity existing to a remarkable degree. An almost unerring instinct and selective power rules their actions and organisation. . . . In the animals, consciousness has never returned upon itself. It radiates easily outwards; and the creature obeys without let or hesitation, and with little if any SELF-consciousness. And when man first appears on the earth, and even up to the threshold of what we call civilisation, there is much to show that he should in this respect still be classed with the animals."*

With the dawn, and the development, of civilisation there grew up institutions and customs which were destined to influence

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 43.

tremendously, for good or ill, man's character; and which gave rise to what Carpenter speaks of as the "fall." Without the qualities thus brought into existence, it is quite safe to say, man could never have attained to his estate. "The human soul which has wandered darkling for so many thousand years, from its tiny spark-like germ in some low form of life to its full splendour and dignity in man, has yet to come to the *knowledge* of its wonderful heritage, has yet to become finally individualised and free, to know itself immortal, to resume and interpret all its past lives, and to enter in triumph into the kingdom which it has won.

"It has in fact to face the frightful struggle of self-consciousness, or the disentanglement of the true self from the fleeting and perishable self. The animals and man, unfallen, are healthy and free from care, but unaware of what they are; to attain self-knowledge man must fall; he must become less than his true self; he must endue imperfection; division and strife must enter his nature. To realise the perfect Life, to know what, how wonderful it is—to understand that all blessedness and freedom consists in its possession—he must for the moment suffer

divorce from it; the unity, the repose of his nature must be broken up, crime, disease and unrest must enter in, and by contrast he must attain to knowledge."*

This conflict, unrest, unhappiness must continue so long as there is opposition between the egoist and the altruist instinct; and, as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, this will be, broadly speaking, so long as society is based upon private property. With the recognition and development of the real self, as our lives, and labours, and pleasures become more social, and Public Ownership takes the place of Private Monopoly; when men learn their true relationship to their fellows and the Power at work throughout the Universe, and Love casts off its fetters and becomes *the* factor in man's regeneration, then the selfish and the social motives will be harmonised, and the individual will find his greatest good in the welfare of others; and realise his own, and their, kinship to the great Whole of Nature.

This social-consciousness, as distinct from the extreme self-consciousness of to-day, will come as the result of the latter, just as self-consciousness grew out of the semi-

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure, p.* 45.

consciousness of the animals and primitive man.

The evolution of consciousness opens out a wide and fertile field; and one that Carpenter has tilled diligently, and his toil has been abundantly rewarded. If it is possible for individual self-consciousness to evolve into, and become lost in, social-consciousness, are we not justified in assuming that it is, or will be, possible for man to attain a still higher state of consciousness—namely, cosmic or universal consciousness? Edward Carpenter believes that we are, nay, he is convinced that we are; and this conviction underlies and permeates all his writings. Indeed, if we accept *Towards Democracy* seriously we must admit that this poem was written under, and is inspired by, some emotion closely akin to, if not exactly of the nature of cosmic consciousness. The absolute faith and optimism, the perfect confidence even in death, the boundless joy, the sense of limitless freedom, the recognition of the equality of all living creatures, and the fullest acceptance of what is considered good and evil, imply a deeper insight into the cosmic processes than the ordinary mortal has yet attained, or they are meaning-*less*, and worse than useless.

" I arise out of the dewy night and shake my wings.

Tears and lamentations are no more. Life and death lie stretched before me. I breathe the sweet æther blowing of the breath of God.

Deep as the universe is my life—and I know it; nothing can dislodge the knowledge of it; nothing can destroy, nothing can harm me.

Joy, joy arises—I arise. The sun darts overpowering piercing rays of joy through me, the night radiates it from me.

I take wings through the night and pass through all the wildernesses of the worlds, and the old dark holds of tears and death —and return with laughter, laughter, laughter:

Sailing through the starlit spaces on outspread wings, we two—O laughter! laughter! laughter!

. . . .

" What is certain, and not this? What is solid?—the rocks? the mountains? destiny?

The gates are thrown wide open all through the universe. I go to and fro—through the heights and depths I go and I return: All is well.

" I conceive the purport of all suffering.

The blear-eyed boy, famished in brain, famished in body, shivering there in his rags by the angle of the house, is become divine before me; I hold him long and silently by the hand and pray to him.

. . . .

"All is well: to-day and a million years hence, equally. To you the whole universe is given for a garden of delight; and to the soul that loves, in the great coherent Whole, the hardest and most despised lot is even with the best; and there is nothing more certain or more solid than this." *

Granting the possibility of Man's power to attain Cosmic Consciousness, it may still be asked: "What bearing has this fact upon his ordinary life? And what light does it throw upon the problem of a future life?" The answer to the first query is—"a very close bearing"; to the second—"a very clear light."

In Carpenter's opinion Man is composed of what, for the want of a better term, we may call four elements: (*a*) The actual body; (*b*) The outer personality or animal self; (*c*) The inner personal ego or soul; (*d*) The

* *Towards Democracy*, p. 4 *et seq.*

eternal and immortal self. Corresponding with the three latter divisions there are three stages of consciousness.

"There is first the stage of simple consciousness, in which the Knower, the Knowledge, and the thing Known are still undifferentiated. Though we cannot observe this directly, nor draw the exact line at which it begins or ceases, we seem to be able to discern its existence clearly enough in the animals." *

"The second stage is that in which the great mass of humanity at the present is; it is that in which the differentiation of Knower, Knowledge, and the thing Known has fairly set in. . . . The consciousness of Self becomes more and more distinct, and with it the consciousness of an object antagonising the Self. . . . Whether suddenly, or gradually, this, of course, has to come to every one. Its arrival can generally be noticed without difficulty in any young child. It is the beginning of a new era in its development, and from that moment life begins to shape round the Self. . . . Such is the birth of self consciousness." †

"Finally, with the complete antagonism

* *The Art of Creation*, p. 54.
† *Ibid.*, p. 56 *et seq.*

of subject and object, of ' self ' and ' matter,' and all the antagonisms which follow in its wake—of intellect and emotion, the individual and society, and so forth—and the terrible disruption of life and society which ensue—comes the third stage. . . . When this consciousness comes it brings with it a strange illumination. For the object and the ego are felt to be one, not only through the special act of knowledge which unites them, but deep down in their very essence. A circle is, as it were, completed; and the external act of knowledge is no longer merely external, but is transformed into a symbol of a vast underlying life." *

The very existence and persistence of vegetable and animal life implies a kind of immortality even for the physical body, for as one organism decomposes, or is digested, it enters into the composition of other bodies. As one form of life expires other forms manifest themselves.

Then there is the idea of immortality which is postulated by the Buddhists, and is such an important item in the teachings of the Theosophists—Reincarnation. The idea that at death the soul of each creature

* *The Art of Creation*, p. 61.

passes into another form, either higher or lower, as it strives upwards or drifts downwards, during each incarnation, until the individual attains Nirvana and becomes consciously part of the God-Head.

Again, there is a more or less prevalent notion of what may be termed Mass Immortality; the idea that though men may perish Humanity will live for ever. That there is an Ultimate Good towards which all ethical tendencies are directed, and towards the upbuilding of which all our higher impulses and better deeds contribute, while our individual souls become absorbed in the Soul of Humanity. The defect of this theory lies here. Instead of uniting the object and subject they are divided. It separates the knower from the thing known; the effect from the cause, and our actions not only from the body which performed them, but also from the ego which willed them.

There is a world of difference between these ideas of a limited, conditional immortality, and the idea of the survival of the ego which underlies and inspires the whole of Carpenter's teachings. If we are deprived of the sense of our identity, our life, here and hereafter, is closed—finished—and the word

Immortality is devoid of meaning—Heaven and Hell are empty phrases, and we can have no further interest in the matter. If we hope to survive at all it is because we are what we are, not by virtue of what we have done.

"The eternity of the All-soul or Self of the Universe is, I take it, a basic fact; it is from a certain point obvious. . . . That being granted, it follows that if the soul of each human being roots down ultimately into the All-self, the core of each soul *must* partake of the eternal nature." *

"In attacking the subject, then, of the survival of the Self, I suppose the first question ought to be: What is the test of survival, what do we mean by it? And to this, I imagine, the answer is Continuity of Consciousness. This would seem the only satisfying definition. Consciousness is necessary in some form or other, as the base and evidence of our existence; and continuity in some degree is also necessary, in order to link our experiences together, as it were into one chain. Continuity, however, need not be absolute . . . it may be broken . . . but as long as Memory bridges the intervals

* *The Drama of Love and Death*, p. 131.

we get the *sense* of continuity of life or personality." *

Carpenter suggests that in the after death state Memory will do this, and that the individual will know itself to be a participant in the life everlasting. Consequently, holding this opinion, Death can have no terror for him, or for those who share his faith. The fear and distrust of death, so general among the great mass of people, Carpenter insists must be overcome.

"The best way to dispel this fear is to walk through the gate oneself every day—to divest oneself of that consciousness, and, mentally speaking, to die from time to time † . . . if you inhibit thought (and persevere) you come at length to a region of consciousness below or behind thought, and different from ordinary thought in its nature and character—a consciousness of quasi-universal quality, and a realisation of an altogether vaster self than that to which we are accustomed. . . .

"It is to die in the ordinary sense, but in another sense it is to wake up and find that the 'I,' one's real, most intimate self, pervades the universe and all other beings

* *The Drama of Love and Death*, p. 134.

† *Ibid.*, p. 79.

. . . and that one's soul is in touch with the souls of all creatures. Yes, far closer than before. It is to be assured of an indestructible immortal life and of a joy, immense and inexpressible—to drink of the deep well of rest and joy, and sit with all the Gods in Paradise."*

"The mystery of mortal life clears, or dissolves away, by our passing in a sense beyond personality; and the hour arrives when we look down on these local days, these self-limitations, as phases—phases of some vaster state of being. Death is the necessary door by which we pass from one such phase to another; and Love is even a similar door." †

It is futile to urge, as many people nowadays do, that if we take care of our present life, the future life will take care of itself. Having stated this, the fact remains that our belief, or lack of belief, in a future state does and *must* to some extent influence our attitude towards the present state. Only in the light of eternity can the little span of time which divides the cradle from the grave be rightly valued or used.

If it is necessary and right to strengthen

* *The Drama of Love and Death*, p. 80.

† *Ibid.*, p. 284.

and develop the body, is it not equally right and necessary to exercise and to develope the soul? The purpose of life is not completely fulfilled with the procreation and cultivation of the physical—it includes the genesis and exfoliation of the spiritual ego as well. Indeed, is it not reasonable to assume that it is the latter that gives body and vitality to the former? If the theory of evolution is applicable to the physical, it should be equally valid upon the psychical plane.

Ours is an age of indecision so far as the problems of Religion, God, and Immortality are concerned. The majority of people refrain from deciding definitely either on one side or the other; many are honestly unable to do so. But will such conditions always prevail? Will the searchers for truth always be satisfied with such an ambiguous position? It is hardly likely. It is more than probable that they will arrive at very definite conclusions. Either that the Universe is the work of God, or that it is a mere fluke; that man is the incarnation of the divine, or that he is "such stuff as dreams are made of"; that there is a rational purpose in creation, in which we as rational beings share, or that

there is no such purpose, no ultimate end save oblivion. As the world grows better, as the boundaries of knowledge are extended, and as Man's power over external, and his own inner, nature is developed, these questions will press for a solution.

"As the world becomes more enjoyable, men will be more loath to leave the warm precincts of the cheerful day; as life becomes sweeter it will be more highly valued. And then it will be for the masses a question of pessimism or a new religion. For if they are convinced that there is no ultimate good in which they share, no rational end in which they are partakers, but that the Kingdom of Heaven is, after all, really nothing but 'meat and drink,' we may be sure that their pessimism will not be of the *dilettante* kind toyed with by some literary persons, but a most serious practical matter, with tragic consequences more momentous to this world than any yet recorded." *

Notwithstanding Carpenter's eloquence, his arguments, and the masterly way in which he uses the data available to substantiate his thesis, it may still be argued

* *Walt Whitman,* by Wm. Clarke, p. 130.

that it is impossible to prove the immortality of man. This may, or may not, be so. But it is Carpenter's conviction, and he certainly submits adequate reasons for holding it, that the evidence in favour of survival is so abundant and conclusive, that the burden of proof rests with those who deny rather than with those who affirm. However, it is in the power of the sceptical to test the validity of Carpenter's contention by examining the evidence brought forward by him, by developing harmoniously their various faculties, by analysing their own experience, their own physical and psychical constitution, and by striving to acquire that cosmic consciousness which Carpenter claims is, in some degree, within the reach of all; and which when attained will enable them to realise the kinship of their own soul with the Universal Soul, and to *know* that the annihilation of either is unthinkable. We must "do the Will" if we "would know the Doctrine." Only by so doing can one earn the right to speak in the affirmative or in the negative.

We must do this, moreover, for the very reason that "the question of survival may ultimately resolve itself very much into the question of the more complete and effectual

understanding between these portions of the self. When they come into clear relation with each other, when the unit-man and the mass-man merge into a perfect understanding and harmony, when they both become conscious of their affiliation to the great Self of the universe, then the problem will be solved—or rather we may perhaps say the problem will cease to exist."*

Be this as it may, there is one error to be avoided. It must not be inferred that belief in, and preparation for, a future state need cause us to ignore, or reject, the possibilities of this world. Edward Carpenter is as keenly alive to these, and as desirous that we should take full advantage of them, as any one can be. His object is not only to teach us how to make ready for the future life, but also how to make radiant and beautiful the life that is.

* *The Drama of Love and Death*, p. 155.

III

His Message to the Individual

Is reform needed? Is it through you?

The greater the reform needed, the greater the Personality you need to accomplish it.

You! do you not see how it would serve to have eyes, blood, complexion, clean and sweet?

Do you not see how it would serve to have such a body and soul that when you enter the crowd an atmosphere of desire and command enter with you, and every one is impressed with your Personality?

O, the magnet! the flesh over and over!

Go, dear friend, if need be give up all else, and commence to-day to inure yourself to pluck, reality, self-esteem, definiteness, elevatedness,

Rest not till you rivet and publish yourself of your own Personality.

WHITMAN.

BELIEVING that many who are desirous of freeing themselves from the artificialities of life will find help and encouragement in the clear words of Edward Carpenter, I venture to select a few of those having a particular bearing upon the subject in hand.

To say that we all desire to live a joyful

and healthy life is to give expression to a mere truism; we are all agreed that we ought to be able to enjoy such a life. But very few know how to realise, or even what constitutes a true life. "To obtain a place, a free field, a harmonious expansion, for your activities, your tastes, your feelings, your personality, your self," Carpenter tells us, "is to Live. To be blockaded on all sides, to be pinned down, maimed, and thrust out of existence is to Die."* This, though true, were idle did he not also tell us how the conditions necessary for the realisation of a true life are to be secured.

To live a full, healthy, and joyous life we must learn to know our place in the universe, that is our true relation to external nature, and to our fellows—and bring into harmony with these relationships our thoughts, emotions, and desires.

In order to gain the knowledge, the power spoken of, it is essential that we should develope the faculty of self-control—that is, the mastery of our passions, desires, and thoughts. As Carpenter says: "Mastery is the great word of the Art of Life. There are other words, like Candour, Courage,

* *Angel's Wings*, 2nd edition, p. 211.

Perseverance; but Mastery includes them...* Mastery: to keep rising out of attachments to any one thing, and to make all things into symbols, emblems, means of converse, of union with others. . . . Nor must man be enslaved by a motive—lest he become a monomaniac. He must use all motives—to express himself. . . . To express oneself, to bring all the elements of one's nature into harmony—all of them—and then to get them uttered in one's life: to build them out into the actual world, into a means of union with others; how glorious that were!" †

From this it will be seen that Carpenter is no fanatic, he does not ask us to be plaster saints—to stamp out all passions or desires. In fact, he teaches us the reverse of this.

"Let the strong desires come and go; refuse them not, disown them not; but think not that in them lurks finally the thing you want.

"Presently they will fade away, and into the intolerable light will dissolve like gossamers before the sun." ‡

And further, "there is no necessity to

* *Angel's Wings*, 2nd edition, p. 219.
† *Ibid.*, p. 223.
‡ *Towards Democracy*, p. 172.

suppose that desire, in itself, is an evil; indeed it is quite conceivable that it may fall into place as a useful and important element of human nature—though certainly one whose importance will be found to dwindle and gradually disappear as time goes on. The trouble for us is, in our present state, that desire is liable to grow to such dimensions as to overcloud the world for us, imprison and shut us out from inestimable Freedom beneath its sway." *

Along with the faculty of self-control will be developed the power of concentration and suppression of thought. In fact, self-control implies this. The need of this faculty is well put in the following passages: "Yet this is an absurd position for man, the heir of all the ages, to be in—hag-ridden by the flimsy creatures of his own brain. If a pebble in our boot torments us we expel it. We take off the boot and shake it out. And once the matter is fairly understood it is just as easy to expel an intruding and obnoxious thought from the mind. About this there ought to be no mistake, no two opinions. The thing is obvious, clear, and unmistakeable. It should be as easy to expel an

* *A Visit to a Gñani*, p. 40.

obnoxious thought from your mind as to shake a stone out of your shoe; and till a man can do that, it is just nonsense to talk about his ascendancy over Nature and all the rest of it. He is a mere slave, and a prey to the bat-winged phantoms that flit through the corridors of his own brain. . . .* If you can kill a thought dead, for the time being, you can do anything else with it that you please. And therefore it is that this power is so valuable. And it not only frees a man from mental torment (which is nine-tenths at least of the torment of life), but it gives him a concentrated power of handling mental work absolutely unknown to him before. The two things are correlative to each other. . . . I say the power of the thought-machine itself is enormously increased by this faculty of letting it alone on the one hand, and of using it singly and with concentration on the other. It becomes a true tool, which a master-workman lays down when done with, but which only a bungler carries about with him all the time to show he is the possessor of it."†

The question now arises: How can the ability to do this be most completely and

* *A Visit to a Gñani*, p. 36.
† *Ibid.*, p. 38.

swiftly developed? It can only be accomplished by looking at life in a reasonable manner. If we do this, we shall see at once that it is necessary for us to simplify and purify our lives. Simplification of life does not mean that we should understudy the cynic Diogenes—and live in a tub! It means rather that we should critically examine our surroundings, so that we may really know what is and what is not necessary to life. It means that we must examine the things commonly regarded as necessities, from the utilitarian point of view; and if the good, the happiness we get from them does not outweigh the pains we take to maintain them, we should get rid of them. In this case they are but so many barriers between us and life. We must dispense with superfluities if we would make the most of the necessities.

This " is a question of facts, and of the art of life. And the facts are these. People as a rule, being extremely muddle-headed about life, are under a fixed impression that the more they can acquire and accumulate in any department, the ' better off ' they will be, and the better times they will have. Consequently when they walk down the street and see nice things in the shop

windows, instead of leaving them there, if they have money in their pockets, they buy them and put them on their backs or into their mouths, or in their rooms and round their walls; and then, after a time, finding the result not very satisfactory, they think they have not bought the *right* things, and so go out again and buy some more. And they go on doing this in a blind habitual way till at last their bodies and lives are as muddled as their brains are, and they can hardly move about or enjoy themselves for the very multitude of their possessions, and impediments, and duties, and responsibilities, and diseases connected with them."* Until we are above this "mania of owning things" there is no possibility of our realising a true life.

"Life is an art, and a very fine art. One of its first necessities is that you should not have *more* material in it—more chairs and tables, servants, houses, lands, bank-shares, friends, acquaintances, and so forth, than you can really handle."†

"Sweet secret of the open air—
That waits so long, and always there unheeded,

* *Angels' Wings*, p. 238. † *Ibid.*, p. 242.

Something uncaught, so free, so calm, large confident—
The floating breeze, the fair hills and broad sky,
And every little bird and tiny fly or flower
At HOME in the great whole, nor feeling lost at all or forsaken,
Save man—slight man!

" He, Cain-like from the calm eyes of the Angels,
In houses hiding, in huge gas-lighted offices and dens, in ponderous churches,
Beset with darkness, cowers;
And like some hunted criminal torments his brain
For fresh means of escape continually;
Builds thicker, higher walls, ramparts of stone and gold, piles flesh and skins of slaughtered beasts,
'Twixt him and that he fears;
Fevers himself with plans, works harder and harder,
And wanders far and farther from the goal.

" And still the great World waits by the door as ever,
The great world stretching endlessly on

every hand, in deep on deep of fathomless content—

Where sing the morning stars in joy together,

And all things are at home." *

"Is it not a true instinct, therefore, of so many individuals in a time like the present, when they find their actual lives nipped and cankered on the surface by the conditions in which they live, to hark back not only to simpler and more 'natural' external surroundings, but also to those more primitive and universal needs of their own hearts, from which they feel a new departure may be made?"†

Man is wrapped in conventionalities and prejudices, like a baby in swaddling clothes. These are bound so tightly and are so numerous that man, like the baby, can hardly move a limb; the only thing he can do freely is to howl or wail. This most men do with a vengeance. The racial, national, religious, political, professional, family, and individual prejudices must be temporarily laid aside, if not entirely discarded, so that the man may stand naked, erect and free

* *Towards Democracy*, p. 376.
† *Angels' Wings*, p. 247.

—so that he may stand face to face with the problem of life, as it presents itself to him; and endeavour to solve it by the strength of his own manhood, not waiting in vain for someone else to solve it for him. The story of the Sphinx has ever a fearful significance. Now, as of old, the Sphinx—Life—propounds a riddle which each of us must answer; if correctly, all will be well, and abiding joy our reward; if incorrectly, we must die.

To rid ourselves of prejudice is difficult; but the power will come with the development of the faculties of self-control, and concentration. The more completely we succeed, the more clearly shall we see the oneness of the human race—of life. National, religious, and other distinctions will fade into insignificance. We shall see that under all distinctions there is our common humanity. In other words, we shall be compelled to recognise the essential equality of man. As Carpenter says: "The medium in which the knowledge of Yourself subsists is Equality. When you have penetrated into that medium (as the young shoot penetrates into the sunlight) you shall know that it is so—you shall realise yourself—but not till then." *

* *Towards Democracy*, p. 37.

Equality, according to Carpenter's conception, is not a thing of sentiment; not a mere theory; no mental illusion. The life and experience of all the best and wisest men and women the human race has yet produced prove it to be nothing more or less than a simple statement of fact.

" You cannot violate the law of Equality for long.

Whatever you appropriate to yourself now from others, by that you will be poorer in the end;

What you give now, the same will surely come back to you.

If you think yourself superior to the rest, in that instant you have proclaimed your own inferiority;

And he that will be servant of all, helper of most, by that very fact becomes their lord and master.

Seek not your own life—for that is death;

But seek how you can best and most joyfully give your own life away—and every morning for ever fresh life shall come to you from over the hills.

Man has to learn to die—quite simply and naturally—as the child has to learn to walk.

The life of Equality the grave cannot

swallow—any more than the finger can hold back running water—it flows easily round and over all obstacles.

A little while snatching to yourself the goods of the earth, jealous of your own credit, and of the admiration and applause of men.

Then to learn that you cannot defeat Nature so—that water will not run up hill for all your labours and lying awake at nights over it:

The claims of others as good as yours, their excellence in their own line equal to your best in yours, their life as near and dear to you as your own can be.

So letting go all the chains which bound you—all the anxieties and cares—

The wearisome burden—the artificial unyielding armour wherewith you would secure yourself, but which only weighs you down a more helpless mark for the enemy—

Having learnt the necessary lesson of your own identity—

To pass out—free—O joy! free, to flow down, to swim in the sea of Equality—

To endue the bodies of the divine Companions,

And the life which is eternal." *

* *Towards Democracy*, pp. 351, 352.

Carpenter warns us against idly dreaming of the things that are afar off, and neglecting the things that are near at hand; against trying to emancipate the human race and allowing ourselves to remain the veriest slaves. The admonition is not unneeded. We are so dazzled by the thoughts of the things we intend doing in the future, the life we might live under other conditions, that we are blind to the possibilities of the present, and fail to make the most of our opportunities now. He reminds us that external conditions are of only slight account, are not really obstacles in the path to individual freedom, and in fact may be made to serve our purpose instead of retarding it. If we could convince ourselves that every circumstance in life holds advantages peculiar to itself, what misery, what anguish, we might escape.

" Is your present experience hard to bear?

Yet remember that never again perhaps in all your days will you have another chance of the same.

Do not fly the lesson, but have a care that you master it while you have the opportunity.

. . . .

" Are you laughed at, are you scorned? Do they gaze at you and giggle to each other as you pass by? Do they despise you because you are misshapen, because you are awkward, because you are peculiar, because you fail in everything you do—and you know it is true?

Do you go to your chamber and hide yourself and think that no one thinks of you, or when they do only with contempt?—

My child, there is One that not only thinks of you, but who cannot get on at all without you.

. . . .

" Do not fear; do not be discouraged by the tiny insolences of people. For yourself be only careful that you are true.

. . . .

" What if you had gladly disguised and covered your own defects, allowing thus the ignorant ridicule of the world to fall more heavily on those who could not or would not act a lie?

What if you had been a rank deserter, a cowardly slave, taking refuge always on the stronger side?

Ah! what if one weary traveller in the world, in the steep path painfully mounting,

you making it steeper still had added the final stone of stumbling and despair?

Better to be effaced, crazy, criminal, deformed, degraded.

Better instead of the steep to be the most dull flat and common-place road.

Better to go clean under-foot of all weak and despised persons.*

. . . .

"Do not hurry: have faith.

Remember that if you become famous you can never share the lot of those who pass unnoticed from the cradle to the grave, nor take part in the last heroism of their daily life.

If you seek and encompass wealth and ease the divine outlook of poverty cannot be yours—nor shall you feel all your days the loving and constraining touch of Nature and Necessity;

If you are successful in all you do, you cannot also battle magnificently against odds;

If you have fortune and good health and a loving wife and children, you cannot also be of those who are happy without these things." †

* *Towards Democracy*, p. 34 *et seq.*

† *Ibid.*, p. 172.

His Message to the Individual

"Have faith. If that which rules the universe were alien to your soul, then nothing could mend your state—there were nothing left but to fold your hands and be damned everlastingly.

But since it is not so—why, what can you wish for more? all things are given into your hands.

Do pity you a man who, having a silver mine on his estate, loses a shilling in a crack in his house floor?

And why should another pity you." *

And we may add, why should we pity ourselves?

As an aid to us, in our efforts to learn "this lesson complete," the value of the Ideal cannot be over-estimated. This being so, it may be well to draw attention to Carpenter's ideal type of man and woman. First the man:

"Who is this, easy with open shirt, and brown neck and face—the whites of his eyes just seen in the sultry twilight—through the city gardens swinging?

. . . .

(Who anyhow is he that is simple and free

* *Towards Democracy*, p. 173.

and without after-thought? who passes among his fellows without constraint and without encroachment, without embarrassment, and without grimaces? and does not act from motives?

Who is ignorant or careless of what is termed politeness, who makes life wherever he goes desirable, and removes stumbling-blocks instead of creating them?)

Grave and strong and untamed,

This is the clear-browed unconstrained tender face, with full lips and bearded chin, this is the regardless defiant face I love and trust;

Which I came out to see, and having seen do not forget." *

Now the woman:

" I see the noble and natural women of all the Earth; I see their well-formed feet and fearless ample stride, their supple strong frames, and attitudes well-braced and beautiful;

On those that are with them long Love and Wisdom descend; everything that is near them seems to be in its place; they do not pass by little things nor are afraid of

* *Towards Democracy*, pp. 42, 43.

big things; but they love the open air and the sight of the sky in the early morning.

Blessed of such women are the children; and blessed are they in childbirth. The open air and the sun and the moon and running streams they love all the more passionately for the sake of that which lies sleeping within them.

Recurved and close lie the little feet and hands, close as in the attitude of sleep folds the head, the little lips are hardly parted;

The living mother-flesh folds round in darkness, the mother's life is an unspoken prayer, her body a temple of the Holy One.

I am amazed and troubled, my child, she whispers—at the thought of you; I hardly dare to speak of it, you are so sacred;

When I feel you leap I do not know myself any more—I am filled with wonder and joy—

Ah! if any injury should happen to you!

I will keep my body pure, very pure; the sweet air will I breathe and pure water drink; I will stay out in the open, hours together, that my flesh may become pure and fragrant for your sake;

Holy thoughts will I think; I will brood

in the thought of mother-love. I will fill myself with beauty; trees and running brooks shall be my companions:

And I will pray that I may become transparent—that the sun may shine and the moon, my beloved, upon you,

Even before you are born." *

This summary of Carpenter's message to the Individual may be fittingly concluded by the following beautiful lines:

" Faithful eyes, fail not.

Though sorrows come upon you, though temptations try, though age and grief assault you—fail not, fail not.

How many hang upon you for your light,

Shining in darkness—as the stars that shine

Upon the mighty deep for mariners!

O eyes, be true, give all away for that—

Give all your days and all good name and honour,

If need should be, for that. That we may steer

Through the dark night by you."†

* *Towards Democracy*, pp. 92, 93.
† *Ibid.*, p. 166.

IV

His Message to Society

Wandering at morn,
Emerging from the night from gloomy thought, thee in my thoughts,
Yearning for thee harmonious union! thee, singing bird divine!
Thee coil'd in evil times my country, with craft and black dismay, with every meanness, treason thrust upon thee,
This common marvel I beheld—the parent thrush I watch'd feeding its young,
The singing thrush whose tones of joy and faith ecstatic,
Fail not to certify my soul.

There ponder'd, felt I,
If worms, snakes, loathsome grubs, may to sweet spiritual songs be turn'd,
If vermin so transposed, so used and bless'd may be,
Then may I trust in you, your fortune, days, my country;
Who knows but these may be the lessons fit for you?
From these your future songs may rise with joyous trills,
Destined to fill the world. WHITMAN.

IN the previous chapter an attempt was made to state as briefly as possible the central items of Carpenter's message to the

individual. The object being to stimulate a desire for an intensive life, and to suggest the means whereby all that is implied in the phrase "subjective liberty" may be secured.

While admitting that subjective is far more important than objective liberty; while recognizing with Lovelace that

> " Stone walls do not a prison make
> Nor iron bars a cage "—

it is still obvious that outward liberty is as essential to the well-being and the happiness of society as inward liberty is to the well-being of the individual. In reality liberty to think and feel and liberty to act cannot be divorced any more than the complex and interacting forces of heredity and environment. Subjective liberty once made possible for us, the problem that inevitably confronts us then is how to secure to each the greatest amount of liberty in action compatible with the liberty of all.

Despite all the talk one hears of freedom and kindred themes, despite the progress we are supposed to have made, it is at once evident to all who look below the surface of things that very little real objective liberty is possible to the mass of humanity under existing social, economic, and political

conditions. The recognition of this fact need not cause us to despair, however, for it only requires a determined and persistent effort on the part of those who become conscious of the transitory nature of the present unsatisfactory state of society, those who possess a knowledge of the past, understand the present, and realise the possibilities of the future, to transform these temporary evils into lasting blessings. The conditions, the institutions of to-day are but so much raw material out of which we may build a future that shall transcend all our dreams.

There are certain elemental facts society, individually and collectively, must learn before we can expect our social and economic energies to be directed in a rational manner, and along proper channels. In the first place there is nothing stationary in the universe; change is not only possible and desirable, but absolutely inevitable; and if we do not strive to reach a higher we must sink to a lower plane. In the second place progress and civilisation are meaningless phrases if they bring not to each a freer, fuller, and more harmonious life; a closer union with his fellows, and a more complete mastery over his own, and external, nature. No one has perceived these truths more

clearly, or expressed them with greater force than Edward Carpenter.

Carpenter, while exposing the hollowness, and almost utter unsubstantiality of our much-vaunted civilisation, sees in it the germs of something better. And he not only draws our attention to these, but also indicates the direction in which they are most likely to be developed.

At this point it may be well to warn the reader against regarding what follows as Carpenter's entire message to society. The writer intends to confine himself to the phase indicated above; an important phase certainly, yet only one of many; for the rest those interested are referred to the various books mentioned.

Carpenter commences one of his most suggestive and characteristic essays by stating that civilisation "is a kind of disease which the various races of man have to pass through—as children pass through the measles or whooping cough." This assertion, though it may sound rather startling, is nearer the truth than it appears on first thought. In connection with the idea that " civilisation is a kind of disease," " there is this serious consideration to be made, that while History tells us of many nations that

have been attacked by it, of many that have succumbed to it, and of some that are still in the throes of it, we know of no single case in which a nation has fairly recovered from and passed through it to a more normal and healthy condition. In other words the development of human society has never yet (that we know of) passed beyond a certain definite and apparently final stage in the process we call civilisation; at that stage it has always succumbed or been arrested."*

The Egyptian, Jewish, Greek, and Roman civilisations are four cases in point. In each of these it is important to note: first, that the process has been somewhat similar in character, "quite as similar in fact as the course of the same disease in various persons; and secondly that in no case, as said before, has any nation come THROUGH and beyond this stage; but in most cases it has succumbed soon after the main symptoms had been developed."†

Before proceeding to discuss these symptoms of disease, and the probable cure, it is advisable to make perfectly clear what Carpenter means by Civilisation.

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 15.
† *Ibid.*, p. 21.

" Of course we are aware with regard to civilisation that the word is sometimes used in a kind of ideal sense, as to indicate a state of future culture towards which we are tending—the implied assumption being that a sufficiently long course of top hats and telephones will in the end bring us to this ideal condition; while any little drawbacks in the process, such as we have pointed out, are explained as being merely accidental and temporary. . . . Perhaps it is safer on the whole not to use the word Civilisation in such ideal sense, but to limit its use (as is done to-day by all writers on primitive society) to a definite historical stage through which the various nations pass, and in which we actually find ourselves at the present time. Though there is, of course, a difficulty in marking the commencement of any period of historical evolution very definitely, yet all students of this subject agree that the growth of property and the ideas and institutions flowing from it did at a certain point bring about such a change in the structure of human society that the new stage might fairly be distinguished from the earlier stages of Savagery and Barbarism by a separate term. The growth of wealth, it is shown, and with it the conception of

private property, brought on certain very definite new forms of social life; it destroyed the ancient system of society based upon the *gens*, that is, a society of equals founded upon blood relationship, and introduced a society of classes founded upon differences of material possessions; it destroyed the ancient system of mother-right and inheritance through the female line, and turned the woman into the property of the man; it brought with it private ownership of land, and so created a class of landless aliens, and a whole system of rent, mortgage, interest, etc.; it introduced slavery, serfdom, and wage-labour, which are only various forms of the dominance of one class over another; and to rivet these authorities it created the State and the policeman. Every race that we know, that has become what we call civilised, has passed through these changes; and though the details may vary and have varied a little, the main order of change has been practically the same in all cases. We are justified, therefore, in calling Civilisation a historical stage, whose commencement dates roughly from the division of classes founded on property, and the adoption of class-government." *

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 18.

Now let us see what justification Carpenter finds for using the word disease in connection with such a stage of human evolution.

"To take the matter on its physical side first, I find that in Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics the number of accredited doctors and surgeons in the United Kingdom is put at over 23,000.* If the extent of the national sickness is such that we require 23,000 medical men to attend to us, it must surely be rather serious! And they do not cure us. Wherever we look to-day, in mansion or in slum, we see the features and hear the complaints of ill-health; the difficulty is really to find a healthy person. The state of the modern civilised man in this respect—our coughs, colds, mufflers, dread of a waft of chill air, etc.—is anything but creditable, and it seems to be the fact that, notwithstanding all our libraries of medical science, our knowledge, arts, and appliances of life, we are actually less capable of taking care of ourselves than the animals are. . . . But the word Disease is applicable to our social as well as to our physical condition. For as

* This was written many years ago. The number will certainly be much greater at the present time.

in the body disease arises from the loss of the physical unity which constitutes Health, and so takes the form of warfare or discord between the various parts, or the abnormal development of individual organs, or the consumption of the system by predatory germs and growths; so in our modern life we find the unity gone which constitutes true society, and in its place warfare of classes and individuals, abnormal development of some to the detriment of others, and consumption of the organism by masses of social parasites. If the word disease is applicable anywhere, I should say it is—both in its direct and in its derivative sense—to the civilised societies of to-day.

"Again, mentally, is not our condition anything but satisfactory? I am not alluding to the number and importance of the lunatic asylums which cover our land, nor to the fact that maladies of the brain and nervous system are now so common; but to the strange sense of mental unrest which marks our populations, and which amply justifies Ruskin's cutting epigram: that our objects in life are 'Whatever we have—to get more; and wherever we are—to go somewhere else.' This sense of unrest, of disease, penetrates down even into the

deepest regions of man's being—into his moral nature—disclosing itself there, as it has done in all nations notably at the time of their full civilisation, as the sense of Sin. All down the Christian centuries we find this strange sense of inward strife and discord developed, in marked contrast to the naïve *insouciance* of the pagan and primitive world; and, what is strangest, we find people glorying in this consciousness—which, while it may be the harbinger of better things to come, is and can be in itself only the evidence of loss of unity and, therefore, of ill-health, in the very centre of human life."*

But even this is not the worst. We not only serve as prey to the various forms of disease, we have absolutely forgotten what Health really is. Our very conception of health is false.

"The peculiarity about our modern conception of health is that it seems to be a purely negative one. So impressed are we by the myriad presence of Disease—so numerous its dangers, so sudden and unforetellable its attacks—that we have come to look upon health as the mere absence of

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 17.

the same. As a solitary spy picks his way through a hostile camp at night, sees the enemy sitting round the fires, and trembles at the crackling of a twig beneath his feet—so the traveller through this world, comforter in one hand and physic-bottle in the other, must pick his way, fearful lest at any time he disturb the sleeping legions of death—thrice blessed if by any means, steering now to the right and now to the left, and thinking only of his personal safety, he pass by without discovery to the other side.

"Health with us is a negative thing. It is the neutralisation of opposing dangers. It is to be neither rheumatic nor gouty, consumptive nor bilious, to be untroubled by head-ache, back-ache, heart-ache, or any of the 'thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.' These are the realities. Health is the mere negation of them."*

Truly we have great need of a Healer—of a cure for our disease. Having thus proved the existence of the symptoms of disease, let us now seek for a remedy; and finding it, let us apply it, even though this necessitates, as it will, an entire reconstruction of our individual and collective life. It will aid us

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 30.

in our attempt to do this to know what really constitutes health; and Carpenter does not leave us in doubt on this point. "Man to be really healthy must be a unit, an entirety—his more external and momentary self standing in some kind of filial relation to his more universal and incorruptible part—so that not only the remotest and outermost regions of the body, and all the assimilative secretive and other processes belonging thereto, but even the thoughts and passions of the mind itself, stand in direct and clear relationship to it, the final and absolute transparency of the mortal creature. And thus this divinity in each creature, being that which constitutes it and causes it to cohere together, was conceived of as that creature's saviour, healer—healer of wounds of body and wounds of heart—the Man within the man, whom it was not only possible to know, but whom to know and be united with was alone salvation. This, I take it, was the law of health—and of holiness—as accepted at some elder time of human history, and by us seen as through a glass darkly." *

Remembering the analogy already drawn

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 31.

between the individual and society, it is evident that this definition applies with equal force to both. It is with the application of this definition to society that we are concerned here.

In the preceding chapter I endeavoured to show how unity and harmony might be realised in the life of the individual; now I must try to show how they may be realised in the life of society. We must first learn, however, how we came to be disunited.

We have already spoken of the part played by Property in the evolution of society. It is to the growth of the idea of property that we must look for the cause of our disintegration. "It is evident that the growth of property through the increase of man's power of production reacts on the man in three ways; to draw him away, namely, (1) from Nature, (2) from his true Self, (3) from his Fellows. In the first place it draws him away from Nature. That is, that as man's power over materials increases he creates for himself a sphere and an environment of his own, in some sense apart and different from the elemental world of the winds and the waves, the woods and the mountains, in which he has hitherto lived. He creates what we call the artificial life, of houses and

cities, and shutting himself up in these shuts Nature out. . . .

"In the second place the growth of property draws man away from his true Self. This is clear enough. As his power over materials and his possessions increases, man finds the means of gratifying his senses at will. Instead of being guided any longer by that continent and 'whole' instinct which characterises the animals, his chief motive is how to use his power to gratify this or that sense or desire. These become abnormally magnified, and the man soon places his main good in their satisfaction; and abandons his true Self for his organs, the whole for the parts. Property draws the man outwards, stimulating the external part of his being, and for a time mastering him, overpowers the central Will, and brings about his disintegration and corruption. Lastly, Property, by thus stimulating the external and selfish nature in Man, draws him away from his Fellows. In the anxiety to possess things for himself, in order to gratify his own bumps, he is necessarily brought into conflict with his neighbour and comes to regard him as an enemy. For the true Self of man consists in his organic relation with the whole body of his fellows; and when the

man abandons his true Self he abandons also his true relations to his fellows. The mass-Man must rule in each unit-man, else the unit-man will drop off and die. But when the outer man tries to separate himself from the inner, the unit-Man from the mass-Man, then the reign of individuality, begins—a false individuality, of course, but the only means of coming to the consciousness of the true individuality. . . .* Here in this present stage the task of civilisation comes to an end; the purport and object of all these centuries is fulfilled; the bitter experience that mankind had to pass through is completed; and out of this Death and all the torture and unrest which accompany it, comes at last the Resurrection. Man has sounded the depths of alienation from his own divine spirit, he has drunk the dregs of the cup of suffering, he has literally descended into Hell; henceforth he turns, both in the individual and in society, and mounts deliberately and consciously back again towards the unity which he has lost."†

The question may be asked here: "In what direction must man move to ensure this?" "It can hardly be doubted that the

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, p. 49.
† *Ibid.*, p. 56.

tendency will be—indeed is already showing itself—towards a return to nature and community of human life. This is the way back to the lost Eden, or rather forward to the new Eden, of which the old was only a figure. Man has to undo the wrappings and the mummydom of centuries, by which he has shut himself from the light of the sun and lain in seeming death, preparing silently his glorious resurrection—for all the world like the funny old chrysalis that he is. He has to emerge from houses and all his other hiding places wherein so long ago (ashamed as at the voice of God in the garden) he concealed himself—and Nature must once more become his home, as it is the home of the animals and the angels. . . .

" In such new human life then—its fields, its farms, its workshops, its cities—always the work of man perfecting and beautifying the lands, aiding the efforts of the sun and soil, giving voice to the desire of the mute earth—in such new communal life near to nature, so far from any asceticism or inhospitality, we are fain to see far more humanity and sociability than ever before: an infinite helpfulness and sympathy, as between the children of a common mother. Mutual help and combination will then have

become spontaneous and instinctive: each man contributing to the service of his neighbour as inevitably and naturally as the right hand goes to help the left in the human body—and for precisely the same reason. Every man—think of it!—will do the work which he LIKES, which he desires to do, which is obviously before him to do, and which he knows will be useful—without thought of wages or reward; and the reward will come to him as inevitably and naturally as in the human body the blood flows to the member which is exerting itself. All the endless burden of the adjustment of labour and wages, of the war of duty and distaste, of want and weariness, will be thrown aside —all the huge waste of work done against grain will be avoided; out of the endless variety of human nature will spring a perfectly natural and infinite variety of occupations, all mutually contributive; Society at last will be free and the human being after long ages will have attained to deliverance.''*

* *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure,* p. 58.

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